

Cadence

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A monthly e-newsletter keeping you in step with the MiTAPS initiative

Governor Granholm Signs Laws To Cut Red Tape, Speed Permitting Process

A package of bills designed to cut red tape in state government and speed the process for obtaining various state permits and licenses was signed into law by Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm on July 22, 2004.

"Anytime we can make state government more accessible and friendly to our customers, we are exercising efficiency," Granholm said. "These new laws are just a small part of what my administration is doing to slash red tape and speed the permitting process."

The Governor said the new laws are part of the processes already underway in several state departments.

MiTAPS, a major initiative by the

Governor to put all permits online and provide one-stop shopping for new businesses and business expansions is progressing quickly.

Granholm also mentioned the online permitting system to help businesses better access water and air quality permits currently under development by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) as part of the new initiatives. Currently, there are stormwater permits online for users to access. In September, six more environmental permits will be offered.

Just a few of the laws related to permitting the Governor signed:

- Senate Bill 1234 to require the state to issue or deny permits

for licenses for boilers within 90 days.

- House Bill 5879 to require the state to issue or deny permits and licenses for food establishments within 90 days.
- HB 5890 to require the state to issue or deny permits and licenses for elevator contractors within 90 days.
- HB 5894 to require the state to issue or deny permits and licenses for mechanical contractors within 90 days.

For more on the recent laws signed related to permitting, check the news release issued July 23, 2004 at: <http://www.michigan.gov/minewswire/>.

Cadence Call

"The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today."

— Franklin D. Roosevelt



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Office of Media Technology

Electronic Filing: Good For Michigan, Good For Business

As one of its earliest pioneers, Michigan is reaping the benefits of the Internet-based National Environmental Information Exchange Network, developed in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other states. The Exchange Network's language, tools and protocols allow Michigan's industry to gain faster access to their

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Electronic Filing, Good For Michigan

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wastewater permit requirements and provide monthly reports electronically to the State's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Like most states, Michigan has the authority to manage the wastewater monitoring program for EPA. This responsibility includes the collection of the Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) from nearly 1,200 industrial and municipal facilities, such as automobile manufacturers and municipal wastewater treatment plants, permitted to discharge wastewater to rivers and lakes. DMRs document the facility's effluent monitoring results against its permitted limits, thus determining its compliance status.

DMRs are one of the nation's largest reporting requirements, second only to tax reporting. The sheer volume of required monthly information, along with incompatible computer systems, creates a burdensome obstacle to both permitted facilities and State water regulators.

Until recently, the only reporting option available to permitted facilities was to mail paper DMRs to DEQ in Lansing. DEQ staff was then required to enter the data manually into their own computer data system, and again into EPA's Permit Compliance System – the

storehouse for reports submitted by the facilities with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits.

This difficult and time consuming process resulted in data coding errors, and a three-year backlog of daily reporting results. The process also made the distribution and sharing of data within the DEQ costly and slow.

The new electronic (or e-DMR) process has begun to eliminate these problems. The reporting backlog no longer exists, and data quality is improved with the electronic transfer of DMRs to EPA. Data that once took weeks to acquire can now be downloaded in seconds by DEQ water management staff.

Since Spring, 2003 permitted facilities across Michigan have been able to access their reporting requirements from the state's Electronic Exchange (E2) web site and upload their reports electronically. The reports are sent in eXtensible Markup Language, or XML, to an DEQ database. A parallel system was established in January, 2004 to allow the state to also electronically report directly to the EPA, all without duplicative data entry.

The investment has paid off handsomely. After only 13 months of

operation, nearly 30 percent of all permitted facilities voluntarily elected to report electronically, with subsequent State-EPA electronic reporting.

The State of Michigan expects to annually save between \$250,000 to \$500,000 once all 1,200 facilities are using the system. Cost savings to the permitted facilities are estimated to be an additional \$2.5 million per year because of reductions in data management and clerical administration costs.

A short, narrated e-DMR demonstration that walks the user through the electronic reporting process can be found at: http://www.statesdx.net/pages/public/eDMR_Demo/michigan_deq.html.

The e-DMR XML schema and tool kits are available free of charge at the Exchange Network registry at: <http://www.exchangenetwork.net>. Click on the Registry link on the left, then the Discharge Monitoring Report (e-DMR) Schema version 1.2 for the latest schema and toolkits (JAVA and .NET).

For more information about this capability, please contact either Michael Beaulac at beaulacm@michigan.gov or 517-241-7808 or contact Jeffrey Jones at jonesjj@michigan.gov or 517-335-4125.